



## Design for **Integration**

John Eaton Elementary School is located in the Cleveland Park Historic District serving a community of 500 from all four quadrants of Washington, DC. Eaton's motto 'Many Cultures, One Community' served as the guiding principle for the initial concept with various contextual opportunities and challenges influencing the design.

The primary purpose of the project was to renew an aging, outdated elementary school, bringing it to modern educational standards (50% additional program space) while preserving and restoring their charming historic buildings and precious outdoor space. The solution was to add additional program below the outdoor space, utilizing the steep slopes to create an entirely accessible site. Rather than the 30' level change on the site being a challenge, it was an opportunity to bring light to the lower level while being at grade on the main entrance side of the site, ensuring all spaces had access to natural light.





## Design for **Well-Being + Discovery**

The light-filled entryway immediately makes the Eaton Eagles feel at home, creating an energetic environment that inspires learning. Eaton's "One Community, Many Cultures" motto is brought to life with bright colors, engaging graphics, and playful ways to introduce students to other languages and cultures.



## Design for **Resources**

Separating the gymnasium/ auditorium from the student dining space was a key Owner requirement. The design locates both spaces at the lower level, the gymnasium floor being the lowest part of the building to accommodate an exterior play space on its roof.



## Design for **Well-Being**

John Eaton is a community that loves books (and consequently their library). Beyond enlarging the book shelf capacity, the new library also re-imagined a much loved feature of their old space – the ‘story time’ reading corner – a small tiered seating area where the librarian read to students. Overlooking the entrance plaza, the new reading corner celebrates the ‘bookworm’ DNA of the student population.

## Design for **Equitable Communities**

Cleveland Park is a charming residential neighborhood with an 'Historic District' designation (which requires Historic Agency Review). Prior to engagement, a different group of consultants prepared a feasibility study for the modernization which included massing diagrams of possible approaches. The neighborhood reacted to the study strongly, opposing many of the proposals. They organized together and voiced their concerns to local government officials; they even erected 'no big box renovation' signs in front yards in protest.

For all modernization projects, DCPS establishes a School Improvement Team (SIT) composed of a broad inclusive representation of school

staff, parents, and community stakeholders. The SIT is engaged at predetermined milestones throughout the modernization process to inform and solicit feedback.

In this case the SIT was a highly engaged collaborative group who made their voices heard. The process of engagement significantly informed the design, and over time suspicion and concern subsided. At completion, one of the most vocal SIT members (a direct neighbor to the site) expressed heartfelt appreciation for the process and resulting building.



*It wasn't always easy or pretty...the hard stuff never is. I hope future DC school projects use Eaton as a model of collaborative and inclusive success.*

John Eaton Elementary School Neighbor



OUTDOOR PLAY SPACE WITH VIEW OF NATIONAL CATHEDRAL TO THE RIGHT